

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 FRB-03 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 PRS-01 /063 W
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R 141248Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5246
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 1807

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP (ROCKEFELLER, DAVID), IS
SUBJECT: DAVID ROCKEFELLER'S VISIT TO ISRAEL

REF: TEL AVIV 1644 (NOTAL)

1. CHASE MANHATTAN CHAIRMAN DAVID ROCKEFELLER WAS IN ISRAEL MARCH 11-12 ON THE FINAL LEG OF HIS MID-EAST TOUR. ALTHOUGH IN ISRAEL ONLY 24 HOURS, HE MET WITH FINANCE MINISTER RABINOWITZ, HAD AN HOUR-LONG MEETING WITH SENIOR BANK OF ISRAEL AND MFA OFFICIALS, TALKED BY TELEPHONE WITH GOLDA MEIR AND FOREIGN MINISTER ALLON (BAD WEATHER PREVENTED A HELICOPTER FLIGHT TO ALLON'S KIBBUTZ), AND DINED WITH JERUSALEM MAYOR KOLLEK. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY CHASE EXECUTIVES JOSEPH REED AND MICHAEL CURRAN.

2. THE MOST SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION WAS HELD WITH BOI AND MFA OFFICIALS (WITH THE EMBASSY'S ECON COUNSELOR ALSO PRESENT) AT THE KING DAVID HOTEL SHORTLY AFTER THE PARTY ARRIVED FROM JORDAN ON FRIDAY AFTERNOON. THE ARAB/ISRAEL
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ISSUE WAS THE MAIN TOPIC, WITH ROCKEFELLER GIVING AN EXTENSIVE ACCOUNT OF IMPRESSIONS RECEIVED DURING HIS VISIT TO ARAB CAPITALS. THERE WAS ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO ECONOMIC OR FINANCIAL QUESTIONS IN ANY OF HIS DISCUSSIONS IN ISRAEL.

3. MR ROCKEFELLER SAID THAT IT IS NOW ABSOLUTELY CLEAR

THAT MAJOR CHANGES HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN ARAB ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL. ALL OF THE ARABS WITH WHOM HE TALKED SPOKE IN TERMS OF ISRAEL'S CONTINUED EXISTENCE AND THE NEED TO FIND A WAY TO A FINAL PEACE SETTLEMENT. NO ONE SPOKE OF DESTROYING ISRAEL, HE SAID. WHILE HE HAD NOT MET WITH ARAFAT, HE BELIEVED THAT THE PLO ATTITUDE WAS ALSO CHANGING, AS A RESULT OF PLO LOSSES IN LEABNON AND STRONG PRESSURE FROM MODERATE ARAB LEADERS.

4. IN ROCKEFELLER'S VIEW, WE ARE SEEING THIS YEAR A "CONSTELLATION OF ELEMENTS" WHICH OFFER BETTER PROSPECTS FOR PEACE THAN POSSIBLY EVER BEFORE. WE CANNOT AFFORD, HE SAID, TO LET THE OPPORTUNITY PASS WITHOUT A SUPREME EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A BREAKTHROUGH. LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD A SETTLEMENT WITHIN A REASONABLE PERIOD WOULD INEVITABLY UNDERMINE THE POSITIONS OF THE MODERATE ARAB LEADERS AND FACILITATE THE RETURN OF SOVIET INFLUENCE TO THE AREA. HE DID NOT THINK EITHER WAS IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST.

5. MR. ROCKEFELLER THOUGHT THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE RAPIDLY CHANGING MID-EAST SITUATION WHICH SHOULD BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO ISRAEL. THE ARABS SEEM DETERMINED TO DEVELOP THIS AREA AND NOW HAVE THE FINANCIAL POWER TO DO SO. HE MENTIONED IN THIS REGARD THE ENORMOUS RESERVES -- APPROACHING \$50 BILLION IN SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF STATES -- WHICH WILL BE SPENT AND HOPEFULLY MOST OF IT FOR DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES. WITH PEACE ISRAEL COULD PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN MIDDLE
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EAST DEVELOPMENT, CONTRIBUTING KNOW-HOW AND SKILLS IN AGRICULTURE, BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY. HE SAID THAT HE HAD IN FACT MENTIONED THE POSSIBILITY OF A FUTURE ISRAELI CONTRIBUTION IN JIDDA AND WAS PLEASED TO FIND THAT THE RESPONSE "WAS NOT NEGATIVE".

6. EASILY THE GREATEST CHANGE IN ATTITUDE SINCE HIS TRIP LAST YEAR WAS OBSERVED IN DAMASCUS. HIS TALKS THERE WERE FAR BETTER THAN THE LAST TIME IN TERMS OF BOTH SUBSTANCE AND ATMOSPHERE. THE SYRIANS ARE MORE OPEN AND FRINEDLY, AND SEEM GENUINELY INTERESTED IN PLACING THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES ON A BUSINESS-LIKE BASIS.

7. TURNING AGAIN TO THE GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS, ROCKEFELLER SAID THAT THE MAJOR PROBLEM SEEMED TO BE THE PROCEDURAL QUESTION OF PLO REPRESENTATION, BUT HE WAS HOPEFUL THAT SOMETHING COULD BE WORKED OUT. IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSION, THE CONSENSUS AMONG THE ISRAELI OFFICIALS (AT THE KING

DAVID MEETING) WAS THAT WHILE THE PLO POSED REAL PROBLEMS, THE CONTINUING LACK OF TRUST BETWEEN ISRAEL AND HER NEIGHBORS IS THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE TO A FAR-REACHING SETTLEMENT. ON OFFICIAL NOTED THAT EVEN IF THERE WERE NO PLO, ISRAEL WOULD STILL BE EXTREMELY RELUCTANT TO GIVE BACK VERY MUCH OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORY SO LONG AS IT HAD SO LITTLE TRUST IN ARAB INTENTIONS.

8. COMMENT: THE ISRAELIS ARE ALWAYS PLEASED TO HAVE DAVID ROCKEFELLER VISIT THEM ON HIS ANNUAL SWINGS THROUGH THE MIDDLE EAST, AND TO HEAR HIS REPORTS ON DISCUSSIONS WITH ARAB LEADERS. HIS VISIT TO ISRAEL THIS TIME WAS UNUSUAL IN THAT WE UNDERSTAND VIRTUALLY NOTHING WAS SAID ABOUT FINANCIAL QUESTIONS. IN THE PAST, HE WAS PRESSED HARD TO AGREE TO ADDITIONAL LENDING BY CHASE MANHATTAN. THE ISRAELIS ALSO CUSTOMARILY RAISE THEIR LONG-STANDING REQUEST FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT

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OF A CHASE BRANCH IN ISRAEL. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, MR. ROCKEFELLER CLEARLY WANTED TO TALK ABOUT POLITICAL QUESTIONS AND THE ISRAELIS HAD LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO GO ALONG.
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